

While a critical history of connoisseurs and connoisseurship is still to be written, we can only rejoice at the almost simultaneous publication of these two remarkable, richly illustrated studies devoted to Mariette, which will certainly allow art historians to refine their discussions of the development of knowledge in the eighteenth century and of the way in which the study of artworks developed as an autonomous field.

Jan Blanc

Thomas Schneider, *Der sakrale Kern moderner Ordnungen: Zur Entwicklung des Werkes von Edward A. Shils*. Berlin: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 2016. Pp. 503. €68.00.

In the footsteps of figures such as August Comte and Herbert Spencer, sociology gradually emerged in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. The precise chronology is still open to discussion, but there seems to be little doubt that the growth and expansion of this field of study was dependent on the institutionalization of a “third culture” situated between the sciences and the humanities.

In the course of the twentieth century, sociology could benefit from the rapid expansion of the university system and become a relatively autonomous field of study. Although tensions between a humanist and a scientific orientation have from the start persisted among the practitioners of this newly established field of study, the availability of funding for large-scale empirical research about various aspects of “mass society” not only provided support for a strong positivist emphasis within many departments of sociology but also weakened the structural ties with the humanities.

In the mid-twentieth century, the tensions within this “third culture” became clearly visible. Despite the relatively strong emphasis on classical authors at that time, positivist or scientific expectations also imposed themselves. Talcott Parsons, for example, who is arguable the most influential sociologist of that era, had trouble legitimizing the development of a theoretical or conceptual framework as a specific professional activity, on a par with the various experiments and large-scale data collection projects also sponsored by national governments and philanthropic foundations. In his well-known Project on Theory at Harvard University (which resulted in 1951 in *Toward a General Theory of Action*, published by Harvard University Press), Parsons spoke of theory as “a guide to research,” as a source of “hypotheses to be applied and tested” (Parsons, 3) in social inquiry. His attachment to the rhetorical figure of the “breakthrough” (i.e.,

the classical *Eureka* moment) is also illustrative of this understanding of evidence-based theorizing; Parsons even recounted the sequence and timing of the breakthrough events in the Project on Theory with the precision of date-and-time lab results. In his view, theorizing was subject to patterns of discovery and advance similar to those in empirical, scientific research.

Edward Shils, who was an external participant in Harvard's Project on Theory and the coeditor of *Toward a General Theory of Action*, must have been confronted with similar tensions during his long career. Shils's career started in the early 1930s in the Department of Sociology of the University of Chicago. Despite part-time appointments at several other universities, he remained at the University of Chicago until his death in 1995. With a co-appointment in Chicago's Committee on Social Thought, however, he also became somewhat of an outsider in the Department of Sociology. But it was a position that allowed Shils to stress sociology's ties with the humanities, to put emphasis on the social importance of intellectual and religious traditions and their ongoing reinvention, to focus on the use of hermeneutic approaches—not only to understand intellectual and religious/ideological traditions but also to make sense of the “hard” data acquired via empirical research. The editorial roles which Shils fulfilled for journals such as *Encounter*, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, and, especially, *Minerva*, allowed him to facilitate the diffusion of these views.

The book under review presents a detailed overview of Shils's scholarly work and its broader (social and scholarly) context. It is organized around four periods. The first part is devoted to the early decades of Shils's life (1910–40) and mainly focuses on his involvement with the early Chicago School of Sociology. In this period, Shils also started with the translation of German writings of European authors with theoretical ambitions, such as Max Weber, Karl Mannheim, and Michael Polanyi. The second part deals with the 1940s, Shils's reflections on the impact on individuals of the values dominating in specific “primary social groups” (including units of the German Wehrmacht during World War II), his collaboration with Talcott Parsons, and the ideas presented in *Toward a General Theory of Action*. The third part is devoted to the 1950s; it concentrates on Shils's role in the (covertly CIA-funded) Congress for Cultural Freedom, his anti-McCarthyism, and his work on tradition, authority and civil religion. In the final part of this book, Thomas Schneider presents concepts that were central to Shils's late work, such as center and periphery, or ideology and civility.

Shils left no major book publication(s); his most influential work was published in the form of book chapters and journal articles devoted to analyses of contemporary events or concerns. During his lifetime, however, Shils repeatedly put emphasis on the lines of continuity within his oeuvre. In the book under review, Schneider stays close to Shils's own story. He not only defends Shils against his critics, but time and again

also argues that Shils's work is nowadays mistakenly disregarded, both in the human and the social sciences. Although Schneider is a knowledgeable and well informed author, his book might have benefited from a somewhat more distanced, reflexive approach. How did Shils try to position himself in regard to other scholars in the human and the social sciences? Why was he hardly able to complete book-length studies? Why did he remain so much of an outsider, despite his central positions in the academic system?

Part of the answer might be found in the increasing disciplinarization of the post-World War II academic world. For Shils, sociology had to remain close to the humanities. It had to build upon the achievements of the humanities in order to make sense of human society in its various modern forms. In his view, there existed an "indissoluble tie" between sociology and the humanities. This tie consisted of "their common subject matter and the shared appreciation of the human qualities of the moral, intellectual, and aesthetic powers that constitute the humanity of their subject matter" (373). For Shils, "sociology is humanistic because it attempts to understand whatever man does, in categories that acknowledge his humanity: his need for cognitive orientation; his capacity for rational judgment and action, for affectionate attachment, for aesthetic expression and response, for moral decision" (373). In the second half of the twentieth century, however, such a view was clearly at odds with dominant currents, which called for disciplinary independence. Shils's views did not fit the disciplinary project within sociology. Thomas Schneider's biography of Edward Shils is a fine publication on Shils's work itself, but a more systematic analysis of the shifting disciplinary projects and ambitions in the course of the six decades of Shils's academic career would have improved this study.

Raf Vanderstraeten

Gordon Hutner and Feisal G. Mohamed, eds., *A New Deal for the Humanities: Liberal Arts and the Future of Public Higher Education*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2016. Pp. 196. US\$23.00 (paper).

The essays in *A New Deal for the Humanities* ask a simple question: Will the humanities survive at public universities? And if they do, what rationale will be offered for their continuance, and what changes must be made to reflect today's world? These questions are framed as a critique of the recent American Academy of Arts and Sciences' report